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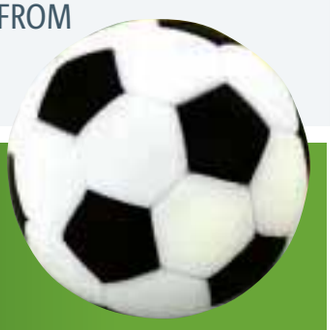
MATCH-FIXING HITS CANADIAN SOCCER

SMALL-TIME LEAGUE DRAWING ATTENTION FROM EUROPEANS WHO PAY OFF PLAYERS PAGE 4



REGINA metro®
Wednesday, September 12, 2012
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WHL poised to benefit from any NHL disruption

Season begins Sept. 20.
Level of competition could increase this year as players stay back

JEFF MACKEY
jeff.mackey@metronews.ca

While hockey fans focus on the looming National Hockey League lockout, the Western Hockey League (WHL) season is going to start without a hitch — and with potentially more competitive play than usual.

"The last time we had (NHL) lockouts we saw the benefit of some of the players staying back, which obviously changes the level of competition in the league," said Regina Pats president Brent Parker.

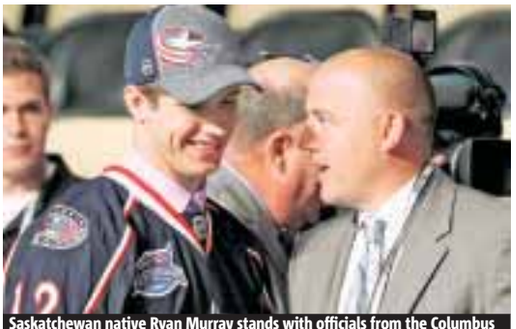
If a lockout should begin this weekend, players like second overall draft pick Ryan Murray, 18, could be sticking around in the WHL instead of playing in the big leagues.

Older players could be hanging back as well. "What you will see is that there might be a few more 20-year-olds in the league this year," said Lorne Molleken, general manager and head coach of the Saskatoon Blades.

"Usually at this time of year we lose a number of prospects to different training camps," said Molleken. "This year these players are obviously still in our camp, which is a huge positive for us."

The Regina Pats and Saskatoon Blades will host one another in pre-season action this weekend. The teams face off in Regina on Sept. 14 and in Saskatoon on Sept. 15. The 2012 WHL season begins on Sept. 20.

For coverage of the NHL negotiations, see page 12



Saskatchewan native Ryan Murray stands with officials from the Columbus Blue Jackets after being chosen second overall in the first round of the NHL draft in June. If an NHL lockout occurs, Murray and other NHL-bound players could be back in the WHL this season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

WHL

Attendance boost likely to be minor

While there may be some spike in WHL game attendance in the event of an NHL disruption, for the most part, Saskatchewan WHL hockey clubs are not expecting a huge increase.

"The last time there was a lockout our attendance may have been only a little bit better," said Lorne Molleken, general manager and head coach of the Saskatoon Blades.

"We are in a different market than a lot of places," said Regina Pats president Brent Parker. "The (Saskatchewan) market is so dominated by the football club — by the media and fans alike — that we just didn't see huge change.

"You get some eyeballs pointed in your direction," said Parker. "But it won't be like in the NHL markets, or the teams that are close to NHL markets." METRO

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman speaks with reporters following talks with the NHLPA in Toronto on Aug. 23. Negotiations continue between the NHL and the NHLPA as both sides try to avoid a potential lockout.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Infrastructure summit

As city planners from across Canada meet, Regina's own infrastructure needs loom PAGE 2

Remembering 11 years on

Americans mark 9-11 with subdued ceremonies held around the country PAGE 3

High time for winery tours

Experience the harvest at more than 30 wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. PAGE 9

Rodeo

Province to host Professional Bull Riders

For the third-year in a row Saskatchewan will play host to the Professional Bull Riders (PBR) National Finals.

Vice-president of PBR Canada, Jason Davidson, said having the PBR national finals relocated from Calgary to Saskatoon has proven very successful.

"It's been a tremendous move for us," said Davidson. "I think the province of Alberta has the Calgary Stampede and I think Saskatchewan would be proud we have the PBR Canada finals."

Davidson, who's from Saskatoon, said he's thrilled to be hosting the event in his own backyard.

"This is home, so to be able to show off, so to speak, in my own backyard is a huge honor," he said.

The event runs Nov. 16 and 17 at Credit Union Centre. METRO

Online

For more local news go to metronews.ca

Telecommunications

SaskTel asking for too much personal info: Official

A Crown corporation is facing criticism from Saskatchewan's privacy commissioner for collecting too much personal information on people.

Gary Dickson says SaskTel improperly collected health numbers and other personal information over the phone.

Dickson's office started an investigation after getting a complaint from a man who called SaskTel about his phone bill and was asked for his social insurance number or health card number.

According to the report, SaskTel says the numbers are needed to run an effective business operation. METRO

Regina's infrastructure checklist growing: CFO

Tasks. City to-do list is well known by council, including stadium, wastewater treatment plant and roads

ROB BROWN
rob.brown@metronews.ca

Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco and Coun. Mike O'Donnell reflect on morning presentations Tuesday at the 2012 National Infrastructure Summit, being held in Regina this week. ROB BROWN/METRO

As city planners from across Canada spend time in Regina for a national look at infrastructure, the Queen City has its own checklist of projects to address.

"Obviously, the biggest two things are the stadium and our wastewater treatment plant," said Regina Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Manager Brent Sjoberg, from the 2012 National Infrastructure Summit, being held in downtown Regina this week.

Sjoberg said other items also top the city's to-do list.

"Things like the downtown library and police service building are buildings council and staff have their eye on," said Sjoberg. "We need investments in roads — that is something we see and hear about everyday —and is a concern from motorists, residents and business."

The summit is an opportunity for city planners from across the country to gather and share information.

Sjoberg said replacing older infrastructure is also a challenge in Regina.

He said some underground services, such as utility corridors and water mains, could be 100-years old.

"The work we are doing will help us get a better assessment of these life spans. Some of the types of materials used for these things are no longer used," said Sjoberg. "The challenge with replacing these types of utilities is balancing the needed changes with service disruption."

Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco said the three-day summit, which wraps up Wednesday, was a strong follow-up to last year.

Fiacco said the 2012 event allowed planning and discussion to move from a conceptual stage to something more tangible and practical.

Your comments

Queen City residents weigh-in on city infrastructure:

"The city should look after their roads before anything else."
Saeed Baig

"Moves like the downtown plaza and city square will help rejuvenate the core of the city over the next few years."
Roy Williams

"The stadium (is most important), and I think its location is right where it should be." Abby Dion

Mayoral candidate faces Twitter backlash

Chad Novak announced Friday that he is re-entering the race for mayor. The candidate has recently weathered a negative twitter storm. JEFF MACKEY/METRO

As municipal election season springs to life in Saskatchewan, many candidates are taking to Twitter to share their message.

But as one candidate has shown, too much dirty laundry aired on the social media site may hurt a contender's campaign.

Regina mayoral candidate Chad Novak has found himself in a much more hostile Twitterverse coming into the second round of his campaign (he had dropped out but re-entered the race Friday.)

Novak's Twitter feed is packed with negative responses to his prolific stream of messages.

"@Chad4Mayor I have no time for you, Chad. Unfollow me immediately and take your garbage elsewhere," is the kind of tweet that has reoccurred on the site.

"After you are elected?!?! In bizarro world?! " is another that captures the tone.

So what went wrong? No other candidate in this campaign has elicited so many angry tweets. Why is Novak experiencing such vocal (and public) hostility to his message?

Jeph Maystruck is a social media strategist in Regina, and has kept an eye on Novak's Twitter campaign since its beginning. He believes that Novak's mistake lies in his initial negativity.

"He was negative on Twitter before he had a following," Maystruck explains.

"Right away, Novak was tearing apart the city and the police department. But if you don't have a tribe, you can't tell the tribe what to think. Immediately people in Regina ganged up on him."

Recently, Novak often responds diplomatically to the vitriol, but so far it hasn't seemed to help.

"He hasn't recovered from it, and he probably won't," says Maystruck.

CARRIE-MAY SIGGINS/METRO

Mobile news

If the Terminator rode a horse, this would definitely be it. Scan the code to watch the U.S. military's "mechanical horse" make its debut.

World Statesman. Harper set to receive prestigious award for diplomacy

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is being hailed as "World Statesman of the Year" by an American organization that previously feted Jean Chrétien and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

The Prime Minister's Office says Harper will travel to New York on Sept. 27 to receive the award from the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

Harper, according to the organization, will be recognized as a "champion of democracy, freedom and human rights."

The foundation was founded in 1965 by Rabbi Arthur Schneier. Its board includes former U.S. president Bill Clinton and former U.S. secretaries of state Madeleine Albright, James Baker, retired general Colin Powell and George Schultz.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Foundation

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation describes itself as an "interfaith coalition of business and religious leaders (that) promotes peace, tolerance and ethnic conflict resolution."

Cutting ties. Ousted Iranian diplomat sounds off on embassy closure

An ousted Iranian diplomat is taking a parting swipe at Canada over its severing of diplomatic ties.

A statement attributed to the former charge d'affaires at the shuttered Iranian embassy was emailed to the CBC.

Kambiz Sheikh-Hassani says that the decision to close the embassy is unwise, uncivilized and hostile.

He says the move goes against traditional Canadian culture and etiquette.

The government of Iran is now looking for alternatives for providing consular services to Iranians in Canada.

The Conservative government declared last Friday it was ejecting Iranian diplomats from Ottawa and bringing Canadian representatives home.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jurassic Park

Woolly mammoth cells discovered

Scientists have discovered well-preserved frozen woolly mammoth fragments deep in Siberia that may contain living cells, edging a tad closer to the Jurassic Park possibility of cloning a prehistoric animal, the mission's organizer said Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bullied monitor

School bus driver gets $700k cheque

A Toronto man's campaign to give an American grandmother a vacation from a workplace in which she was tyrannized by teenage bullies ended Tuesday with the retired school bus monitor receiving a cheque for $703,000. Karen Klein, 68, of Greece, N.Y., was in Toronto for the ceremony.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Thousands gather across U.S. to honour 9-11 victims

11 years later.
Memorials at three crash sites scaled back after 10-year mark, making experiences more personal

A woman mourns on the wall engraved with the names of victims during observances at the National September 11 Memorial in New York on Tuesday. CRAIG RUTTLE/NEWSDAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Americans marked the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on a crisp, sunny day much like the one 11 years ago when nearly 3,000 victims were killed in the worst terror attack in U.S. history.

The commemoration was smaller and more subdued, a reflection of the nation moving on after a decade of remembrance.

Hundreds gathered at the World Trade Center site in New York, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pa., to read the names of the dead.

"Our country is safer, and our people are resilient," President Barack Obama said in a ceremony at the White House. He and first lady Michelle Obama laid a wreath at the Pentagon, above a concrete slab that said "Sept. 11, 2001 — 937 am."

They later visited the graves of recent war dead from Afghanistan and Iraq at Arlington National Cemetery. The U.S. military death toll years ago surpassed the 9-11 victim count.

Some said last year's 10th anniversary was a turning point for public mourning. For the first time, elected officials weren't speaking at the New York ceremony.

Thousands had attended the ceremony in New York in previous years. This time, the crowd reached about 1,000 by late Tuesday morning. A few hundred attended ceremonies at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

Allied military forces marked the anniversary at a short ceremony at NATO's headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reflection

"Our country is safer, and our people are more resilient."

U.S. President Barack Obama in a ceremony at the White House commemorating the nearly 3,000 9-11 victims.

Scarce resources. Northern Manitoba chiefs angered after photo of unidentified chained man surfaces

A group of northern Manitoba chiefs is complaining that some aboriginals are being chained up in a hockey arena dressing room instead of an RCMP holding cell because of scarce police resources.

"When you look at all these little (non-aboriginal) towns coming down the highway, there are police stations in every town, but when you look at First Nations communities ... you won't see nothing at all," said David Harper, grand chief of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, which represents 30 northern communities.

"You'll see a little gate with a trailer and an (empty) RCMP police truck and that's it. Is that public safety?"

Harper and other chiefs circulated a photo Tuesday of an unidentified man handcuffed and chained and lying on a concrete floor. They said the picture is of a man who was arrested for an alcohol offence last month on the Northlands Denesuline reserve near Lac Brochet. The man was held in the community's arena because Mounties, who are based in another community, have refused to let band members use the RCMP's local detention facility. THE CANADIAN PRESS

An unidentified man is seen handcuffed and chained in this undated handout photo from Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak.
HO-MANITOBA KEEWATINOWI OKIMAKANAK INC./THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The fix is in: Canadian Soccer League infiltrated by crime

Canadian soccer scandal. Metro editor working with CBC threatened at Toronto home while investigating match-fixing ring

BEN RYCROFT
regina@metronews.ca

The Trois-Rivières Attak's Serge Dinkota shoots past Serbian White Eagles keeper Dan Pelc during the CSL championship match in October 2009. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

You could be forgiven if you've never heard of the Canadian Soccer League.

Save for a sprinkling of fans that attend games and watch the occasional screening on Rogers TV, few will have ever heard of the small, backwater league fielding teams in Ontario and Quebec.

Yet, online betting sites offer lines on every CSL game which has attracted European match-fixers looking for an easy target.

In an investigation I worked on with the CBC, we discovered that match-fixers have travelled thousands of kilometres to pay Canadian players to fix results in their favour. Our domestic league has been powerless, unwilling or unable to stop it. And this match-fixing syndicate has tried to infiltrate the league to a point that few would have imagined. The results of the investigation will be shown tonight on The National at 10 p.m. and will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

This investigation stemmed from a German court case last year where the main defendants, Ante Sapina and Mario Cvrtak, admitted to fixing a Canadian Soccer League game on Sept. 12, 2009. That game involved the Toronto Croatia and the Trois-Rivières Attak — at the time, a farm team for the Montreal Impact.

Since the day I brought CBC this story 18 months ago, a lot has happened.

I have had people come to my home with death threats, moved my family to ensure their safety and struggled with the stress that comes with learning to live while looking over your shoulder. When I realized why those two men had threatened me, it made the pit of my stomach drop out at the thought of how close they had been to me. They waited outside my building to let me know that the questions I was asking around the CSL were not ones they approved of — but they mostly did it to send a message.

Others too have received that message. Witnesses to the fixing have come forward, only to drop away with no notice. Players, coaches and entire teams have walked away from the game they love because of the stink that comes from these types of allegations.

Tonight's documentary will walk viewers through how the fixing occurs. It will show why this group and others like it are targeting the CSL. And it will show just how easy it is to manipulate a game for money.

In the grand scheme of things, Canadian soccer is still very much in its infancy. The Canadian Soccer Association may be celebrating its centenary this year but it's really only come into its own in the last 10 years as local soccer has become a priority in this country.

With that new-found love comes a level of naiveté — a sense that the ills that have plagued the world could never come here.

And if Canadians are finally catching on to this game that the rest of the world calls football, they're also about to get a harsh wake-up call to the realities that come with it.

Read tomorrow's Metro for more details.

Feeding the majors

10

Number of players on Canadian MLS team rosters that played in the Canadian Soccer League before starting their professional careers. Seven of that 10 are currently signed to Toronto FC.

Employment

Positive hiring climate expected, survey finds

Canadian employers expect the hiring climate to remain "respectable" in the fourth quarter, according to the latest Manpower Inc. employment survey.

In a survey of 1,900 employers, 16 per cent said they plan to add jobs in the quarter and seven per cent anticipate cutbacks.

Employers in Western Canada expect a strong hiring climate in the quarter partly due to the construction and mining sectors. In Quebec and Atlantic Canada, employers anticipate an upbeat hiring climate for the upcoming quarter. Employers in Ontario, however, project a modest quarter.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tuition fees

Students taking on more debt, report warns

A new report suggests tuition fees are becoming less affordable for many Canadians, forcing an increasing number of students to take on heavy debt loads.

The report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives shows that since 1990, average tuition and compulsory fees for undergraduates have risen by 6.2 per cent annually — three times the rate of inflation.

It now costs, on average, $6,186 a year to study at a Canadian university, and that doesn't include the cost of books, food or lodging.

The left-leaning think-tank expects that number will rise to $7,330 in four years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
102.75¢
(+0.45¢)

Natural gas: $2.992 US (+18¢)
Dow Jones: 13,323.36 (+69.07)

TSX
12,220.45 (+5.02)

OIL
$97.17 US (+$0.47¢)

GOLD
$1,734.90 US (+$3.10)

Nordstrom set to open four stores in Canada

A customer walks out of Nordstrom in Los Angeles. MARK TERRILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Nordstrom is the latest U.S. retailer planning to set up shop north of the border.

Officials from the department store chain and Cadillac Fairview are scheduled to announce Canadian store plans at a media briefing in Toronto on Thursday.

The announcement will relate to Nordstrom's entry into the Canadian marketplace and will identify store locations in Cadillac Fairview shopping centres nationally.

According to previously published reports, the Seattle-based retailer is expected to open in four locations, including a trio of prime Sears Canada locations set to be shuttered this fall.

Sears Canada announced in March it would sell back leases for three of its stores to its landlord, Cadillac Fairview, for about $170 million.

High-profile locations at the Pacific Centre in Vancouver, Chinook Centre in Calgary and Rideau Centre in Ottawa are set to close by the end of October.

It announced a further closure, at the Deerfoot Mall in Calgary, in July.

Canadians can currently purchase goods direct from Nordstrom's website, with shipping fees that includes the cost of duties at checkout.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

iPhone. YouTube releases its own app

YouTube is being reprogrammed for the iPhone and iPad amid growing hostility between Apple and the video service's owner, Google.

The new format debuted Tuesday with the release of a new YouTube application that will introduce more advertising and more videos on Apple's devices.

The changes are being made because Google Inc. and Apple Inc. didn't renew a five-year licensing agreement that established YouTube as one of the built-in applications in the operating system that runs the iPhone and iPad.

YouTube is being bumped from the menu of pre-installed apps on the next version of Apple's mobile operating system, or iOS, which could be released as early as Wednesday, when the latest iPhone is expected to be unveiled.

The updated iOS is dumping Google's digital maps as its go-to source for directions.

The licensing agreement had granted Apple control over the design of the built-in YouTube app on the iPhone and iPad.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A NON-HOCKEY WRITER ON THE NHL LOCKOUT

JUST SAYIN'
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

True confession:

I am not a hockey writer. With a few notable exceptions, neither are most hockey writers.

Oops! That was my outside voice, wasn't it?

If I were a hockey writer, I wouldn't last very long. I would always want to write about the wrong thing.

Instead of reporting on the latest looming lockout (memo to hockey writers: That 'L' thing is called an alliteration) — which, by the way, happens Sunday at 12:01 a.m. if no one pulls a last-minute puck out of a hat — I would have a tendency to get distracted.

For example, did you know that Tyler Seguin just signed a contract with the Boston Bruins that will pay him $34 million US over the next six years? That's a little under $6 million a year.

Did you know that Tyler Seguin is 20 years old?

Now there's something to get distracted about. This kid scored 29 goals for the Bruins last year. According to my calculations, if he scores another 29 this year, he will make about $200,000 US a goal. Doesn't matter if it's a deflection or shot into an empty net.

Boston Bruins' $34M signing

I don't mean to pick on him exclusively. Every team has a rookie phenom whose annual salary exceeds the gross national product of your average banana republic.

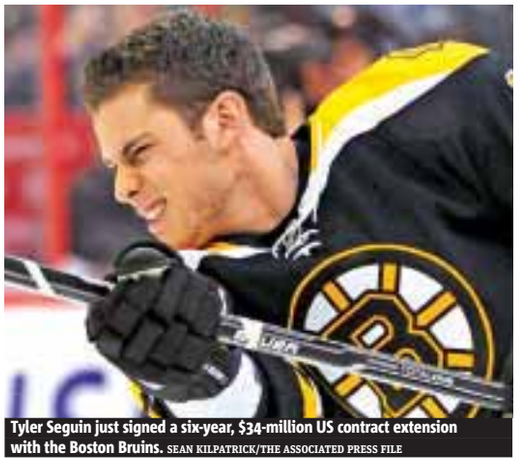
A real hockey writer doesn't question any of this stuff. Me? I'd write about my first real job, when I was a little older than Tyler Seguin. I made $250 a week, before taxes. Of course that was in 20th-century dollars, which adjusted for today's buying power, comes to about $2.50.

I could even argue that my job, which required me to make decisions about the deployment of millions of dollars in government grants to community groups, was more important than Tyler Seguin's. And then I would start wondering if our values were completely out of whack, and the owners and players should indeed take a time out and think carefully about what they're doing.

I mean, what are they doing? Isn't little Tyler, at $6 million a year, making enough money? I don't mean to pick on him exclusively. Every team has a rookie phenom whose annual salary exceeds the gross national product of your average banana republic. Speaking of average, the average salary for an NHL hockey player is $2.4 million a year. The minimum, paid to guys who gather splinters sitting on the bench, is $525,000 US.

Speaking of values being out of whack, the average salary for a pre-school teacher in Boston is $43,000 US. That's what happens when you don't take steroids.

There I go again. At this rate, they'll never let me be a hockey writer.



Tyler Seguin just signed a six-year, $34-million US contract extension with the Boston Bruins. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Duke and Duchess are blooming

STEPHEN MORRISON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Diamond Jubilee

Orchid named after Will and Kate

Prince William and Kate view a hybrid orchid named in their honour at the Orchid Garden within the Singapore Botanical Gardens in Singapore on Tuesday.

The British royal couple is on an official three-day trip to Singapore. It is the first stop on the couple's nine-day tour of the Far East and South Pacific for the queen's Diamond Jubilee marking her 60 years on the throne.

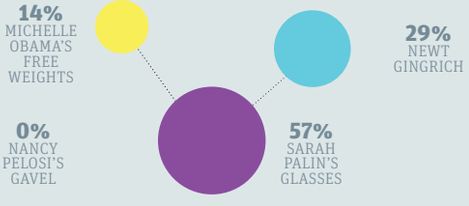
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prince William stops to speak to an honour guard on arrival at the Istana, the official residence of the president of Singapore, on Tuesday. William will also visit the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu with Kate. CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

What other inanimate object would you like to see Clint Eastwood yell at?



Twitter

@_laurengilroy:
Uhhg why is so windy #YQR. My car can't handle wiinnddd.

@lastchapterz:
I hate the haunted elevator in our building. I always feel like im going to get off the elevator...in hell. #yqr

@rmol:
I hate this #YQR myth that you can drive anywhere in this city in 15-20 mins. Maybe true 5-10 years ago but not today!

@TerryMassey:
I'm considering a 8am #road #rage tweet of the day. The only problem is #YQR has so many bad drivers I'd never run out of material.

@Duncan_Noel:
Bus driver just asked me if there are any detours on his route. HIS route. Hmmm. #yqr #busstories

@Tony_Butta:
Wow there are actually stylish people in Regina #eyeopener #Regina

metro

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In Resident Evil: Retribution, Umbrella Corporation's genetic experiments turn the world's population into legions of flesh-eating undead. HANDOUT

How evil corporations ruled through film history

Resident Evil: Retribution. The Umbrella Corp. in gory legacy is part of a long list of heartless movie organizations

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

The Umbrella Corporation is the largest and most powerful corporate entity in the world. At least, in the world of the Resident Evil movies it is.

Since R.E. first appeared on the big screen in 2002, the Umbrella Corp has been responsible for weapons research, the release of the mutating T-virus, experiments on humans, and the creation of biologically engineered supersoldiers.

In this weekend's Resident Evil: Retribution Umbrella's genetic experiments turn the global population into "legions of the flesh eating undead."

Turning the world's people into zombies is pretty dastardly stuff, but Umbrella isn't the only cinematic corporation bending the rules and causing harm.

How about Blade Runner's morally despicable Tyrell Corporation?

Led by a CEO with a God complex, the company genetically engineered organic robots called replicants for use as slaves on space colonies.

Visually indistinguishable from humans, they are banned from earth, and if found on the planet are killed immediately.

That plot inspired another popular sci-fi flick.

When writer Edward Neumeier was asked about the plot of Blade Runner he replied, "It's about cop-hunting robots."

Inspired, he created RoboCop's story about megacorporation Omni Consumer Products who builds the title character, a superhuman cyborg law enforcer.

It's likely that defense firm Cyberdyne Systems had nothing but good intentions when it developed Skynet, the Global Digital Defense Network that features at the center of all the Terminator movies.

The idea was to remove the possibility of human error when responding to military threats. Who knew the technology would one day eliminate the human race?

Elimination of humankind was not on the minds of Soylent Corporation, the entity running things in the sci-fi flick Soylent Green. Set in an overpopulated, polluted world they came up with an alternative food source, Soylent Red and Yellow made of "high-energy plankton."

A third product, Soylent Green, becomes NYC's most popular snack until a cop (Charlton Heston) discovers the green wafer's main ingredient. "Soylent Green is people!"

The Voice takes on X Factor in U.S.

Cowell's fuming. In the U.S. the two shows go head-to-head; but in Canada both are on CTV (X Factor airs tonight)

The stakes are high, the tactics are fierce and the rhetoric is heating up.

Obama versus Romney? Nope. It's the contest between The Voice and The X Factor, which escalated after NBC abruptly moved to pit its Voice against Wednesday's second-season debut of Fox's X Factor.

The two singing contests already faced a tussle over audience votes when NBC scheduled a fall cycle of The Voice after it proved itself as a solid spring performer.

Then, in a post-Labour Day surprise, an apparently mischievous NBC said it was expanding the show's first week from Monday and Tuesday to include a third episode, which happens to air opposite the first hour of the X Factor at 8 p.m.-10 p.m. EDT Wednesday. Fox's show also airs Thursday.

Suddenly, the battle of the talent shows is much more interesting.

Or make that infuriating, if you're X Factor creator, executive producer and judge Simon Cowell. Known for his creative critiques as an American Idol panelist, he was simply blunt about NBC's move.

Cowell took off the gloves when he told a teleconference last week that he was angry "because I think there's a kind of gentleman's agreement." "I think it's mean-spirited and I hope and I pray that it backfires on them, because it's one of the best shows we've ever made," Cowell said.

"But I've learned, don't make any predictions."

Season 2 represents a sophomore reboot for X Factor, which did well last season but failed to pull the 20 million viewers he'd grandly predicted. Instead, it averaged about 12.6 million for its performance and results episodes, which Cowell saw as a "wake-up call" for how to handle the U.S. version of his British hit.

"I was a bit cocky," he said. "I was feeling bullish coming off the U.K. show. And I don't think I really read the (American) market that well."

So is X Factor sharper now that first-year judges Nicole Scherzinger and Paula Abdul are out and Britney Spears and Demi Lovato are in? Yes, said Cowell.

"The show looks better and feels better than what we did a year ago. I can see an improvement. I'm happy with it," he said. In Canada the war's not on since both shows air on CTV. The voice season premiere was broadcast Monday night, the premiere of X Factor airs tonight.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the web

Michael J. Fox takes part in 9-11 event to raise money for charities

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Stewart and Franco? Sure, we'll buy it

THE WORD
Monica Weymouth
scene@metronews.ca

Although she's still shuffling through airports in Robert Pattinson's T-shirts, it seems Kristen Stewart may be entertaining the idea of moving on. The actress was spotted chatting with a "smitten" James Franco at the Toronto Film Festival, reports RadarOnline.

"There was a lot of flirting and Kristen was overjoyed by the attention she was getting from James, who was gushing over her, saying what a great actress he thinks she is and was full of praise for her latest movie, On the Road," a source tells the site. "At the end of their chance meeting, James took Kristen's number and asked her out for dinner. Kristen initially said no, but is mulling over the idea. She knows she has to move on now following her break up with Rob."

Is it just us, or does this "source" sound like Kristen Stewart giving herself a pep talk in the bathroom mirror?

We wouldn't have initially put Franco and Stewart together, but maybe they can bond over complaining about fame while taking roles in blockbusters. Plus, Franco's so pretentious these days, we bet he has a stronger British accent than Pattinson.

Miley Cyrus. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Miley Cyrus throwing punches for her fiancé

Miley Cyrus is leading a pretty dangerous life lately.

First, a man attempts to force his way into her home wielding a pair of scissors — though Cyrus wasn't home at the time — and now she's getting into bar fights. Cyrus and fiancé Liam Hemsworth were hanging out at a nightclub in the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood when a man bumped into Hemsworth, leading to a heated discussion, according to Hollyscoop. After some shoving ensued, Cyrus reportedly got between the guys and ended up shoving the stranger herself and punching him in the face, according to a report of battery he later filed with the police.

So far, no arrests have been made, and Cyrus' reps doubt there will be any.

"This claim is completely false and erroneous," her rep says.

Zac Efron

Efron not offended by gay rumors

Zac Efron appreciates his gay fans — and isn't fazed by speculation about his own sexuality.

"I don't like to live in fear about things like rumors and backlash to begin with — that's the way I was raised — but I just can't see what's so wrong about being gay," he tells the Advocate in an interview.

ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

COMSTOCK/THINKSTOCK

HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

5 HOT SPOTS FOR MUSIC

If you like to "play it loud," these music venues around the world should be on your hit list.

PROVOCATIVE: THE PARADISO, AMSTERSDAM

Things really heat up at this concert hall housed in a converted 19th-century church in Amsterdam. Described as "seriously fierce," this venue's main concert hall in the former church interior seats 1,500 and has high ceilings, two balcony rings and large illuminated church windows. Check the website for the concert lineup, or Paradiso is a popular dance club, too. "You think you know how to party?" wrote one visitor. "Do you? You're wrong. I did, and then I came here."

MYSTERIOUS: THE GREEK THEATER, LOS ANGELES

"When you're at the Greek, there's this type of mystical feeling you get among the crowd," writes one visitor.

L.A.'s premier outdoor theatre is tucked into the corner of Griffith Park, but don't let the picturesque setting fool you. This place is made for noise.

The 5,900-seat venue has amazing sound because of its natural acoustics — the park is actually a canyon. Named "North America's Best Small Outdoor Venue," Pearl Jam, Death Cab for Cutie, Florence & the Machine, The White Stripes, Jack Johnson, and Gotye have all played there recently.

DARE TO EXPLORE: PRIVILEGE, IBIZA, SPAIN

"This isn't a club … it's a whole other world!"

Privilege is the world's largest nightclub with a main room the size of an aircraft hangar. Ibiza is an island in the Mediterranean Sea that has a red hot reputation for its nightlife.

Dance to top rappers and DJs (the DJ booth is suspended above the dance floor) or explore what's around every corner of the club … a swimming pool, acrobats, huge video installations, state of the art lights, lasers, dance troupes, and more.

MICRO EXPERIENCE: THE PHOG LOUNGE, WINDSOR, ONT.

"Phog" is a small lounge in Windsor with a devout following of some of Canada's hippest electronica, free-form jazz and indie rock bands.

"Phog is truly passionate and curious about music," said Casey Laforet of Canada's critically acclaimed Elliot Brood.

Named "Best Live Music Venue in Canada," there is now an annual PhogPhest in the fall where the street out front is closed off for a daylong celebration of indie music. Rural Alberta Advantage headlines there Sept. 15.

EXPERIMENTATION: THE READING FESTIVAL, READING, ENGLAND

Join 87,000 other rock, indie, punk and metal aficionados in tents on Little John's Farm for this three-day music festival every August.

But you have to plan ahead — tickets go on sale in December and sell out fast. The big stage is for major rock, indie, metal and alternative acts, but check out the smaller Lock Up Stage for underground punk and hardcore acts, and a stage for unsigned acts.

"It's about the magic of creating a self-contained world in the middle of a field with thousands of strangers who become your best friends."

5 Gum. Stimulate Your Senses.

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The view from Trius winery, one of more than two dozen wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake. JOSEPH CHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Autumn is a grape time to visit Niagara-on-the-Lake

Harvest heaven. Small town near Niagara Falls boasts wineries, fresh food markets and a theatre festival

Mention Niagara and most travellers think of the famous falls, which deserve their reputation as the mother of all tourist attractions.

But there's another place with Niagara in its name just a half-hour drive from the falls that should be part of any visit to the area: Niagara-on-the-Lake, a lovely town known for wineries, an annual theatre festival and a charming downtown.

And while summer is high season for visiting the waterfalls, September and October are among the busiest months of the year in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

There are more than 30 wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake and 80 altogether in the region, and fall is the season when visitors can see and experience the harvest and the pressing of the grapes.

The Shaw Festival. EMILY COOPER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Visitors can also find locally grown produce, depending on what's in season, including peaches, pears and apples, along with jams, juices and other products, for sale in places like Kurtz Orchards Country Market, 16006 Niagara Parkway, and at a Saturday morning farmers market, through Oct. 6 at 111 Garrison Village Drive.

Fall is also the last chance to catch performances at the Shaw Festival, a popular annual event that takes place in three theatres in Niagara-on-the-Lake, staging works by George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries, plus new plays written about his era (1856-1950). The season began in May, with productions ranging from Ragtime, through Oct. 14, to Hedda Gabler, through Sept. 29. Noel Coward's Present Laughter and Bernard Shaw's Misalliance run through October.

For leaf-peepers, the area has "stunning fall colour," usually peaking in early October, according to Janice Thomson, executive director of Niagara-on-the-Lake's chamber of commerce. The town's leafy waterfront areas include both the Niagara River and Lake Ontario (the waterfalls flow into the river, which flows into the lake). Niagara Parkway, which follows the river, offers a "spectacular drive," according to Tina Truszyk, spokeswoman for the Tourism Partnership of Niagara.

There are also cycling routes along the river and the nearby Welland Canal. Niagara-on-the-Lake has a number of bike rental companies including some like Zoom Leisure Bike — zoomleisure.com — that offer guided bike tours of the wineries.

The region is best-known for ice wine, a specialty product made from grapes frozen on the vine in winter. The frozen grapes are nearly dehydrated so the juice is concentrated, which makes the wine sweeter than table wine.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

If you go...

- **Niagara-on-the-Lake.** niagaraonthelake.com
- **Shaw Festival.** This annual theatre festival runs through late October. shawfest.com.
- **Wine route planner.** winecountryontario.ca/niagara-on-the-lake.
- **Icewine festival.** The icewine festival takes place in January 2013.

On the web

Las Vegas Sands picks Madrid over Barcelona for big Spain casino project dubbed 'EuroVegas'

Sweet and savoury team up in Creamy Apple Curry Chicken

When you think curry, chances are potatoes and chicken come to mind. But you also should consider apples.

Though not necessarily a traditional touch for curry, apples work deliciously well with the big, spicy flavours of the dish. In fact, there is very little that is traditional about the curry assembled here, but we're not all that worried about it. It's so delicious, the name almost seems irrelevant.

A quick sauté of vegetables and chicken — along with those aforementioned apples — is tied together with a creamy curry sauce. To keep the autumnal feel, throw in some dried cranberries and top it with toasted almonds. If you don't want to serve it over rice, you could opt for egg noodles.

1. In a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the onion and sauté until tender, about 7 minutes. Add both bell peppers, cauliflower and chicken. Cook until the vegetables are just tender and the chicken is cooked through, about 10 to 12 minutes.

2. Add the apples, curry powder, salt and pepper. Cook until the apples are just tender, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 each green and red bell pepper, cored and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 cups cauliflower florets
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size cubes
- 3 medium apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup toasted almonds

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3. Sprinkle the flour over everything, stirring to coat. Add the milk and cranberries, stirring and cooking until the sauce comes to a simmer and thickens. Serve sprinkled with toasted almonds.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Drink of the Week

Pretty in pink punch

- 1 can (295 ml) pink lemonade frozen concentrate (unthawed)
- 1 can (250 ml) strawberry daiquiri frozen concentrate (unthawed)
- 250 ml (1 cup) white rum (optional)
- 250 ml (1 cup) water
- 1 l (4 cups) ice cubes
- Sliced strawberries, for garnish

In blender, combine pink lemonade and daiquiri frozen concentrates, rum, if using, and water; add ice cubes. Pulse until blended and frothy, about 1 minute. Float berries on the surface for a special garnish. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ MINUTEMAID.CA

This recipe serves six. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Exciting pork dish, little effort

Weeknight cooking is all about getting gobs of flavour from just a few ingredients, no special techniques and as little effort as possible.

The trick is in finding those big, boldly flavoured ingredients and knowing how to get them to do all (or at least most) of the work for you. That's the idea behind this Mirin Pork Chops with Apple Chutney.

You'll find mirin (a kind of rice wine) in the Asian or international sections of most grocers. The chutney should be nearby, too. It's good to let the pork marinate for at least 30 minutes, but you can get away with 10 minutes or so if you're pressed for time.

Even better: toss the meat in the marinade in the morning and let it absorb the flavour.

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the mirin, garlic powder and salt. Add the pork and turn to coat well. Refrigerate until ready to cook. The pork can be marinated for as little as 10 minutes or up to all day.

2. When ready to cook, heat a grill to high. Using a vegetable oil-soaked paper towel held with tongs, oil the grill grates.

3. Reduce the heat to medium and add the pork. Grill for 6 minutes per side. Set aside.

4. Meanwhile, in a medium skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the apples and onion and sauté until just tender, about 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the chutney.

5. To serve, thinly slice the pork and top each serving with the apple chutney.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 1 cup mirin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 lbs pork tenderloin, halved lengthwise and pounded evenly flat
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 medium apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 10 1/2-oz jar sweet chutney (such as mango)

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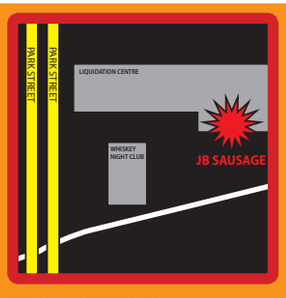

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Experience is key.

It's not what you know, but who you know.

Be open to other options.

These job search strategies – we've all heard them before – sound like a cliché, but they have a wealth of truth ringing through them.

With the summer break now in full swing (I don't think I ever fully appreciated how lucky I was as a student to have summer holidays beginning in April), students will be thinking about landing a position that can give them solid experience in their field.

A recent Accountemps survey found that 78 per cent of more than 270 CFOs (chief financial officers) interviewed believe it is important for entry-level accounting and finance candidates to have gained work experience while in school.

"Even for entry level roles, many employers are in search of new hires who can apply their previous experience and contribute to the organization immediately," says Kathryn Bolt, Canadian president of Accountemps.

"Although this may seem like a catch-22, where it's difficult to land a job without experience or gain experience without a job, candidates who have internships or temporary assignments on their resume are more marketable to a prospective company."

How to get experience while you're still a student:

Network, network, network
Make connections through classes, summer jobs, internships, volunteer placements, etc., and stay in touch with these people. Never underestimate the power of who you know.

Be involved
Participating in groups related to your field will expand your network and give you further experience. However, do not just join — look for opportunities to take on leadership roles. It is important not only to be involved, but to stand out.

Consider temporary work
This can be a way to obtain work experience while meeting prospective employers and getting your foot in with different companies.

Land an internship
Internships give you direct, resumé-worthy experience and often lead into full-time employment.

Volunteer
Find roles that align with your professional goals, if possible. Therefore, if you are an accounting major, consider acting as the treasurer for a student group that interests you. This not only acts as applicable experience, but also helps you discover your strengths in the field you are pursuing.

LEAH RUEHLICKE IS A RECENT CULTURAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH GRADUATE FROM TRENT UNIVERSITY.

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Twitter

@TalentEgg
Question of the day: How can #accounting students stand out at recruitment events? #AccountingWeek

@ashillington
Be confident. Don't be intimidated by other students. Talk career, not job. Bring your card. Dress professionally but not boring.

@voiceofjamesd
Do research, ask relevant qu's, show personality, dress to impress, don't hang out in groups & enjoy it! #PwCBF

@CGA_DoMore
Listening is just as crucial as speaking. Above all prepare and be yourself. The rest will follow... #DOMORE #CGA #AccountingWeek

Size it up. Go big or go small when finding your firm?

When searching for a job at an accounting firm, there are many factors to consider, such as location, types of responsibilities and training.

Another important factor to consider is the size of the firm. Accounting firms can vary in size from one to more than 10,000 people, and it's important to make the choice that will best fit your personality, your career goals and your lifestyle.

Although the experience at each firm may be different, we spoke with recent grads who are now working in accounting about their experiences to help you decide where you'll fit in.

Work-life balance
Large firms often have big groups of 40 or more new accountants starting at once, which means the competition can be higher than at smaller firms. Alissa Kahn, an accountant at a mid-sized firm of about 90 people, says she's lucky she doesn't have that much competition. "With so many people starting at the same level at once, there is a lot of pressure to compete and work overtime. At my smaller firm, I don't really experience that same pressure."

Learning opportunities
However, since so many new accountants start their jobs at once in large accounting firms, it also means the firms tend to invest a lot of time and money in classroom-type training and mentoring, which small firms cannot usually do. "I did not get as much textbook training and I had to really learn on the job. It's good for my career, but it's tough in the beginning," says Kahn.

At larger firms, you may also work in groups or teams and have joint tasks and clients. This is great if you like working in a team and enjoy having multiple perspectives on a project.

Training
While learning on the job will help give you hands-on knowledge in the accounting field, you have to depend on your supervisors to train you. "Most of the time the people that are supposed to be training you are very busy handling their own workloads and don't have time to teach you everything which can be frustrating," says Yoel Hofman, an accountant in a small firm of 25 employees.

VICKY TOBIANAH IS A JOURNALIST AND FREELANCE WRITER WITH AN HONOURS BACHELOR OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

Bigger not always better

"With so many people starting at the same level at once, there is a lot of pressure to compete and work overtime."
Accountant Alissa Kahn

Take this to the bank

Trying to account for where your future of number crunching and fast calculating is going to take you?

- On average, accounting grads with between zero and three years of experience can expect to earn somewhere between $35,500 and $75,500 depending on your role, whether you're working in public or corporate accounting, and whether you're working for a large or midsize/small firm or company.

- Cassandra Jowett

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SPORTS 4

League, players both to blame for labour strife: Daly

NHL. Face to face meeting of two sides hastily scheduled for Wednesday

The NHL and the players' association will resume negotiations on Wednesday in an effort to avoid a lockout this weekend.

After not meeting face to face since last Friday, the sides planned to get together at the league office in New York before the NHLPA holds player meetings later Wednesday.

The NHL board of governors will convene on Thursday with commissioner Gary Bettman, while the union holds a second day of discussions with as many as 250 players.

The hastily scheduled negotiating session for Wednesday came just hours after NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said owners and players were both to blame for their failure to reach a new collective bargaining agreement before current deal expires on Saturday.

Quiet period

- The sides haven't had a full bargaining session since Aug. 31 and the strife is threatening regular-season openers scheduled to start Oct. 11.
- The pre-season is set to begin on Sept. 19.

Daly wrote in an email to The Associated Press on Tuesday that he hoped both sides would meet before Saturday, but didn't sound optimistic it would happen.

"To this point, we have received no indication that the union has anything new to say to us. And right now, we have nothing new to say to them," he wrote Tuesday. "It's unfortunate, but it's the reality of the situation."

That changed Tuesday night. Whether the restart of talks will lead to a quick resolution remains to be seen. The NHL's labour contract expires at midnight Saturday night, and a lockout seems likely. It would be the league's fourth work stoppage since 1992.

"Ultimately, we just want to negotiate a fair deal that will give all our clubs an ability to be stable and healthy," Daly wrote. "We hoped (and still hope) we can do that without causing any interruption to the upcoming season. Logic would have suggested we would have been able to. The fact that we haven't yet is extremely disappointing, and is a failure for which we both must share blame."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jaso down and out at the plate

Blue Jays catcher J.P. Arencibia tags out Seattle Mariners' John Jaso at home plate, Tuesday, in Toronto. The Jays fell 4-3 to the Mariners. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mobile sports

Not many fighters wanted to step into the cage in Toronto against light-heavyweight champion Jon 'Bones' Jones for the upcoming UFC 152, according to UFC boss Dana White. But Brazilian fighter Vitor Belfort was game, saying he still fights "for pleasure" at age 35. Scan the code for the story.

NHL. Bruins secure Seguin with six-year extension

The Boston Bruins have signed centre Tyler Seguin to a six-year, $34-million US contract extension.

Seguin had 29 goals and 67 points last season for Boston — both team highs — in his second NHL season. The 20-year-old had a plus-34 rating, second in the league behind teammate Patrice Bergeron, and played in the 2012 all-star game. The six-foot-one, 182-pound native of Brampton, Ont., was selected second overall by the Bruins in the 2010 NHL draft. He played 74 games in his rookie season, totalling 11 goals and 11 assists.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tyler Seguin GETTY IMAGES FILE

Big-league development

Seattle backs deal for new $490M arena

Efforts to bring the NBA back to Seattle took a giant step forward in a revised arena deal announced Tuesday, with investor Chris Hansen agreeing to kick in more money for transportation improvements near a proposed new arena, personally guaranteeing the city's debt.

The plan for the $490 million US arena, which could also host an NHL team, represents the best shot at bringing the NBA back to Seattle.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ECHL. Minor-league team extends invite to Bieber

The Bakersfield Condors believe Justin Bieber is more than a sweet voice with slick dance moves.

The ECHL team has offered the Canadian-pop phenom an amateur tryout contract for the upcoming hockey season.

The team says in a news release it hopes the five-foot-seven "slender built superstar can provide a rookie presence" for the Condors.

The club also says his "sick flow will fit right in with a Condors team known for their style."

A team spokesman said the club contacted Bieber's agent about the offer but as of Tuesday afternoon there had been no response.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Justin Bieber GETTY IMAGES FILE

A brave new (auto) world

Tech. Get ready for cars that listen, talk and act like a smartphone

The interior of a 2013 F-Series Super Duty pickup truck, equipped with Ford's high-tech Sync voice recognition system, is shown in this photo. HANDOUT

Don't expect to converse with your car quite like David Hasselhoff and KITT did in the '80s TV classic Knight Rider, but voice recognition is one of the big looming trends in the automobile industry.

For years already, some drivers who seek out the latest and greatest in technology have been talking to their cars when they want to listen to music, turn up the air conditioner or get directions.

No need to look away from the road or blindly reach for a knob or button, just speak a command aloud and the car obeys.

Voice recognition and other high-tech features are expected to become far more mainstream in the months and years ahead, as automakers race to outdo each other and tap into consumer demand for an app-inspired, always-connected lifestyle on the road.

CD players have been replaced by hard drives that can store tens of thousands of MP3s, or drivers can connect a smartphone and use its data connection to stream music via the Internet. Dedicated GPS navigation systems are being phased out in favour of multi-function digital panels that look like a smartphone or tablet homescreen, populated with a long list of apps.

"Automakers are trying to replicate that smartphone/touchscreen experience that people are used to and like," says industry analyst and consultant Doug Newcomb.

"Car buyers really want this, that's why automakers are doing it, technology really helps them sell cars."

Perhaps there was no clearer sign that companies are serious about competing to develop the coolest, most advanced in-car technology than an Apple announcement in June. The tech giant revealed it's working with nine automakers to integrate its popular voice-recognition tool Siri into vehicles.

Meanwhile, BMW and Honda are among the car manufacturers that are releasing new in-car technology in Canada this fall.

And at the forefront of the trend has been Ford, one of the more aggressive companies in delivering in-car voice technology to the mass market with its Sync product, which has already been around for about five years.

With Sync, drivers can press a button on the steering wheel and voice their desire to place a phone call, control the stereo, make their vehicle warmer or cooler, or get directions. Ford claims the system recognizes 10,000 different commands — although there's no master list available to consumers so that's difficult to verify.

"Our world is changing," Bill Ford, Ford's chairman, said at a recent press event in Dearborn, Mich.

"We've got over four million vehicles with Sync on the road today and what's cool is we have an open platform, so developers are developing apps for Sync. And we love that, that's why we did it."

Among those apps available for Sync in the U.S. are the audio streaming services Pandora, MOG and Slacker Radio, a program to listen to tweets posted to Twitter, and another that gives allergy sufferers an update on pollen levels in the local area.

Critics, however, have noted that Sync's ability to understand strings of spoken words is nowhere near as robust as Siri's. Drivers must learn how to speak to the Sync system, which often doesn't respond to natural speech and instead needs to hear a sequence of spoken commands to complete a task.

If your wording is a little off, you'll be prompted to try again. And don't even think of asking jokey questions like you can with Siri.

"It's getting better but it's still not there, it's still all over the map," says Newcomb.

"They're still in that learning phase, a growing pains phase."

The market leader in voice technology is Nuance Communications, which powers Ford's Sync. Gary Clayton, chief creative officer for Nuance, says the technology is constantly evolving and becoming more intelligent.

As of now, most voice recognition systems need to be prompted before they'll listen for user commands. But eventually, the technology will always be listening and will be able to recognize and distinguish between different voices. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ford Focus on track to beat Toyota Corolla as world's bestselling car

The stylish and nimble Ford Focus is on track to unseat Toyota's aging Corolla to become the world's top-selling car, according to Ford.

The company says it sold 489,616 Focus sedans and hatchbacks globally in the first half of 2012, besting the Corolla by almost 27,000.

The Focus has several advantages, says Aaron Bragman, an automotive industry analyst for IHS Global Insight. It is newer, features better handling and styling, has superior technology and a much nicer interior than the Corolla.

"I'd rank it superior to the Corolla in pretty much most ways," says Bragman.

But Toyota isn't conceding the title. It has disputed Ford's numbers, saying its car is still on top when you include Corollas sold under other names. Hatchback versions of the Corolla are sold as the Auris in Europe and Matrix in the U.S.

Toyota also sells the Corolla Verso, a van-like vehicle that Toyota has traditionally counted as a Corolla, says spokesman Mike Michels. Including all the models, Toyota sold 603,840 Corollas in the first half, beating the focus by about 114,000, Michels says.

Toyota is working on a new version of the Corolla which is expected to go on sale next year, although the company hasn't made it official.

Ford made the announcement at its assembly plant in Rayong, Thailand, which opened in May to build the Focus. The plant, which is one of Ford's most advanced, has the capacity to produce 150,000 cars per year for sale in Thailand, Vietnam, Australia and other countries in the region.

Ford's recently revamped Focus is sold in more than 100 countries worldwide.

The 2012 Ford Focus is pictured during its debut at the LA Auto Show in 2010. REED SAXON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's a strong seller in the U.S., where Focus sales were up 31 per cent in the first half of the year compared with 2011.

But the Corolla is still king in the U.S., where it outsold the Focus by nearly 27,500 in the first half of the year.

The Corolla could still pass the Focus as the global top-seller this year, Bragman said. Toyota had few Corollas to sell at the start of the year because last year's earthquake and tsunami in Japan slowed its factories.

But now the car is back at full supply and selling well. Also, last year at this time the Focus was ahead of the Corolla, but the Corolla pulled through in the end, outselling the Focus by more than 100,000 vehicles.

"It might be a bit premature to declare a sales crown," Bragman said.

Also at the plant Friday, Ford executives were celebrating the production of the 350 millionth vehicle Ford has made since its founding 109 years ago.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You are under a lot of pressure at the moment, but how much of it comes from other people and how much of it comes from yourself? Maybe you need to be a bit more relaxed about the world.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Don't plan anything strenuous for today because you need to relax, both physically and mentally. You may be a Taurus and more robust than most but you still need some down time now and again.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
If there is someone you want to say sorry to then now is the ideal time. Venus in the communications area of your chart will make it easy to connect on both an emotional and a mental level.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You have a great deal going for you at the moment, so stop being so critical of yourself. Stand back from everyday events and see your life from a higher and wider perspective. It's actually a pretty picture.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Take life at an easygoing pace and ignore those who say you should be pushing yourself harder. There comes a point where what you put in is more than what you get out. You are near that point now.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you lack enthusiasm for what you are about to do, you will most likely make a poor job of it, so why not postpone it or even give up on it? You're allowed to change your mind you know.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You may want to outshine your rivals and competitors but the planets warn that may not be possible today. It's always a mistake to compare yourself to other people. It's a sure way to drive yourself mad.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You know something that others do not, something that gives you an edge. Whatever that something is, you must be careful how and when you use it. Knowledge is power, so don't reveal it too quickly.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Friends and colleagues are aware of what you can do, so don't waste time trying to prove yourself. The important thing is not that others feel good about you but that you feel good about yourself. Do you?

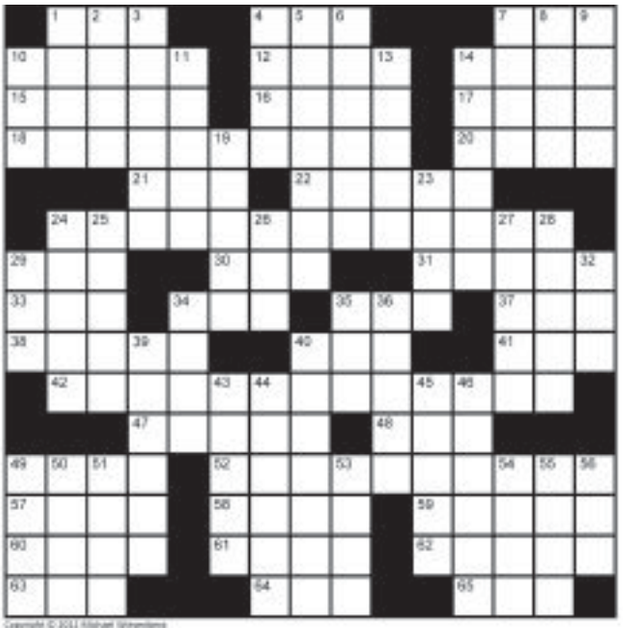
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If there is someone you want to impress, now is the time to speak up and let them know what you can do. But don't exaggerate your achievements to prove what a wonderful person you are. They know already.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Take your foot off the gas and take life at a more enjoyable pace. You don't have to work twice as hard and move twice as fast as everyone else. This is one of those days when less means more.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Those around you will respond better to kindness than coercion today. Also, if you can find it in your heart to forgive someone else's sins today they are more likely to forgive your sins tomorrow. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Island, Water, Rockers, More Water

BY MICHAEL WIESENBERG



Across
1. Windsor product
4. Volcanic fallout
7. "You're it!" game
10. Building usually without a 13th floor
12. Borscht vegetable
14. Flooring material
15. "Lord, ___?": Last Supper question (3 wds.)
16. Tomb Raider Croft
17. Prayer ending
18. ___ Island: the NE fifth of Nova Scotia (2 wds.)
20. "Mmm-hmm" (2 wds.)
21. Sink clog remover
22. Put together in makeshift fashion (2 wds.)
24. It's to Canada's east (2 wds.)
29. Former Pan Am rival
30. Open, as a keg
31. Airtight farm storage buildings
33. Acorn dropper
34. Hearing organ
35. Sum up
37. "A girl" or "a boy" preceder
38. Give up
40. *The Simpsons* bartender
41. Chomped
42. Rock band from Kingston, Ontario, that has received numerous Canadian Music awards, including 14 Juno Awards (2 wds.), with "The"
47. Assembly of church officials
48. ATM charge
49. Autumn colors
52. Ontario, Superior, et al. (2 wds.)
57. One of 52-Across
58. Thor's dad
59. Ctrl-P in many programs
60. Biggest problems of some celebrities
61. Ripped
62. Dispatches
63. Controversial hockey commentator Cherry
64. Scottish "no"
65. Hi-___: sharply detailed, as a monitor

Down
1. ___ Nostra
2. "Take ___ from me ...": "Heed this advice" (2 wds.)
3. Give another account of
4. Adequately skilled
5. Voyage on 24-Across (2 wds.)
6. Intrepid
7. Canada's quintessential coffee and donut place, familiarly
8. Downwind
9. DNA carrier
10. What not to say when taking a sobriety test
11. Tripoli's land
13. Ballroom dance for two
14. Nationalist Republic of China capital
19. Hertz __-_-Car
23. Southern California univ.
24. Anticipate
25. "Care" or "risk" follower
26. Carcinogenic cigarette smoke ingredient
27. A suspect may have one down pat
28. A dissatisfied diner may opt to leave this (2 wds.)
29. Play (with)
32. Former faster-than-sound jet: initialism
34. Boldly unconventional
35. "You've Got Mail!" ISP
36. Blue and white pottery named for a city in Holland
39. Damsels
40. Amber-colored Portuguese dessert wine
43. Bar of gold
44. Chicken ___ bleu
45. Sharp barks
46. One who listens
49. Bassoon or clarinet
50. As a result, in logic
51. Singer Celine
53. PEI's Green Gables girl
54. Cows, archaically
55. Finishes
56. Rds.

Yesterday's Crossword

What's online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

	3	5				8		
			3	7				5
4					1			2
		4	2		3		1	
	6			5			8	
	2		8		4	7		
9			4					1
6				8	5			
		3				9	5	

Yesterday's Sudoku

8	9	1	4	2	5	7	3	6
2	6	5	8	7	3	1	4	9
3	7	4	1	9	6	2	5	8
4	5	9	7	6	1	3	8	2
7	3	6	2	5	8	9	1	4
1	2	8	9	3	4	5	6	7
6	4	7	5	1	2	8	9	3
9	1	3	6	8	7	4	2	5
5	8	2	3	4	9	6	7	1

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